

We have an obligation to the American people to lessen our dependence, to make that ditch shorter and not nearly as deep.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

ENERGY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, with regard to the Energy bill the majority leader was speaking to, we have a pretty good sense on this side what important amendments will need to be disposed of. We hope to move forward on those amendments early in the process. Provided we are given fair treatment on getting up our amendments and voted on, I certainly agree with the majority leader this is an important issue, an issue that needs to be disposed of in the very near future. We will be working with him to get that bill to conclusion at the earliest possible time.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business for not to exceed 60 minutes, equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, with the first half of the time under the control of the Republicans, the second half of the time under the control of the majority, and with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Texas is recognized.

ENERGY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, a story in today's Los Angeles Times states that the approval rating of Congress is the lowest in a decade. The poll reported in today's Los Angeles Times says 27 percent of Americans approve of how Congress is doing its job, and most see business as usual. After Congress has diverted its attention from what I consider to be the most important domestic issue confronting the Nation today; that is, fixing our broken borders and actually enforcing our immigration laws, in order to have a vote of no confidence on the Attorney General in what is clearly a political exercise rather than anything that would produce a meaningful result, we now turn our attention to an important issue and one I hope Congress will

embrace in order to address energy concerns in this country.

Of course, we all know—all we have to do is to drive up to fill up our gas tank—the price of gasoline has gone through the roof. While it is true that Congress can pass laws and Congress can even repeal laws that have been passed by previous Congresses, what Congress cannot do is repeal the laws of supply and demand.

It is important as we look at this legislation before us that we look at whether this legislation is, in fact, designed to fix problems. One of the questions I suggest we need to look to is, Does this bill increase supply? In a global economy we know there is going to be more and more competition for oil and gasoline. We know we are competing, not only in the United States, but literally with China and India, each of which have 1 billion people. Their economies are growing, and the number of people driving and their economic activity is directly related to access to a reasonably priced energy supply. We need to look to see what we are doing at home to try to increase supply.

We all know we are dangerously reliant on imported oil from dangerous parts of the world or from places such as Venezuela, governed by the likes of Hugo Chavez. Current energy policy in this country does nothing but make our enemies richer. It does nothing but line the pockets of people like Hugo Chavez or somebody like President Ahmadinejad in Iran—countries pursuing weapons of mass destruction.

We have to eliminate the schizophrenia that has characterized our energy policy in the past and look at what commonsense steps Congress can take in order to improve the supply of oil and gas, preferably from our own domestic sources at home, so we are less reliant on these dangerous rulers in other parts of the world for the very lifeblood of our economy.

By any measure, the bill that is now before us is an incomplete bill. It deals nearly exclusively with the demand side of the energy equation. While it is worthwhile to aggressively pursue better efficiencies and alternative sources of energy to meet our future energy needs, the provisions in this bill fail to address much of our current energy needs. It is a matter of simple economics. This bill will do nothing to deal with our current energy needs without addressing supply.

I fear this bill will also end up being even more expensive for consumers. Both the provisions in the bill and some of the expected amendments from the majority set up unreasonable mandates for renewable and alternative energy sources, which are more expensive. I do not question our need to produce more of our energy from clean and renewable sources, but I believe the winners and losers should be determined by the market, not by the Government. Indeed, this bill determines for Americans which fuels we will use,

how much, and at what time. That is the last thing we need the Federal Government to dictate—to determine which fuels we will use, how much, and at what time—when public confidence in Congress under this new majority is at a 10-year low. The last thing we need to do is say: Give us the power to determine what fuels you will use, how much, and at what time.

I do believe there is great promise in renewable energy. I am proud that my State, Texas, continues its energy leadership. As a traditional oil and gas State, it now is the largest producer of wind energy in the country—2,749 megawatts as of last year. We are also the largest producer of biodiesel, an industry that has grown rapidly in just the last few years.

It is also unwise to turn away from proven and developing technologies to meet our Nation's clean air goals. For example, nuclear energy has the lowest impact on the environment, including land, air, water, and wildlife, of any energy source because it does not emit harmful gasses. It isolates its waste from the environment and requires less area to produce the same amount of electricity as other sources.

I wouldn't necessarily hold out other countries as a model for America when it comes to their energy policies, but I must say a country such as France that generates 80 percent of its electricity by nuclear power does represent a goal that I think the United States ought to strive for, particularly when nuclear power is cheap. It is conducive of a good environment, and it requires a lot less for us to produce in terms of cost and other collateral issues. I think this is one area where we clearly ought to be encouraging greater use of nuclear power, particularly when it comes to our electricity supply.

I want to say a word about coal. Coal should also continue to play an important role in our energy future. There are clean coal technologies being developed that could enable us to continue utilizing this abundant domestic resource and—this is important—improve air quality. Coal is also expected to remain one of the lowest cost fuels available.

I do believe with Federal investment in programs such as FutureGen, which is a \$1 billion investment in clean coal-burning technology, we can use this 300-year supply of coal in our country in a way that is compatible with a good environment and allows us to maintain the diversity of our energy sources which are essential to the growth of our economy, as well as our national security, from the standpoint of depending less and less on people who are trying to do us harm for the very energy we need.

It is ironic at a time that we are engaged in the global war on terror that many of the state sponsors of terrorism, many of those areas that are in unstable regions of the world, from the standpoint of the global war on terror, are the very ones being enriched by our